

FAREWELL, CDR. JIM CARLTON

By Wendy Leland

Commander James G. Carlton's first foray into the editorial world of *Naval Aviation News* actually occurred before he reported aboard in 1997. At the request of the incumbent editor, he sought out renowned aviation author Stephen Coonts, and scored a coup when Coonts agreed to write an article for the magazine's Sep-Oct 97 issue commemorating the A-6 *Intruder's* retirement. And so, even before assuming the title, an editor was born.

Long before he arrived, the concept of creating a permanent archive of *NA*News magazines had been considered, but the administrative obstacles were daunting. Cdr. Carlton researched a way to have back issues scanned and placed on CD-ROM, and oversaw the often cumbersome process. Now an irreplaceable collection of 16 CDs reflects all of the issues published from 1943 to the Nov-Dec 96 issue, when the magazine became available on the internet. These CDs are incomparable reference tools for the magazine staff, researchers and readers who choose to purchase them.

His accomplishments also had an impact beyond the *NA*News office. Double-hatted as Director, Naval Aviation History & Publications Division, Cdr. Carlton became the point man in dealing with individuals or organizations seeking to trade with the Navy for goods and services in exchange for recovered aircraft or vessels. His predecessors had each struggled with these concerns, exacerbated by the fact that there was no set policy for such trades. With his assistance, a SECNAV instruction is now in effect that governs the circumstances under which a trade can occur.

The commander's ability to handle any situation thrown his way was further tested when he was named Acting



A mustachioed Lt. Carlton, above, was an F-14 *Tomcat* radar intercept officer with Fighter Squadron (VF) 74. Carlton began his operational flying career in the F-4, top, as a "Phantom Phlyer" with VF-103.

Deputy Director of the Naval Historical Center, taking him from managing an office of less than 10 people to managing an entire command of more than 100, with its accompanying civilian and military personnel issues. He filled this role with characteristic aplomb and good humor for more than a year.

Managing Editor Sandy Russell said, "We really missed having daily 'face time' with Cdr. Carlton during this period, but he managed to keep in touch by joining us for lunch occasionally. As the Editor, he was not only a great boss but a good friend. We'll really miss him."

"Cdr. Carlton constantly amazed us with his depth of knowledge," said Art Director Morgan Wilbur. "One summer we noticed mounds in the soil in front of our office. Soon we encountered the creatures responsible for the excavation—giant flying insects! These mammoth bugs would actually frighten passersby, but we soon learned they were harmless. At a bimonthly staff meeting we mentioned these bugs to Cdr. Carlton, who matter-of-factly said they were cicada killers. Known for keeping a straight face while setting

you up for a joke, we thought the commander was pulling our collective legs. As it turned out, he was right. Thus, the commander earned another call sign, Jim 'Cicada Killer' Carlton."

We wish Cdr. Carlton the best of luck in his retirement, which seems fated to find him not far from the world of Naval Aviation in some form or another. To remember him, the staff of *NA*News and the Aviation History Branch need look no further than the wooden Grampaw Pettibone sculptures which he hand-carved and presented to each of us upon his retirement, a symbol of the part he played in this small office that is more like a family.